



POLITICAL COMMITTEE: Topic 1

**INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN THE PEACEFUL USES
OF OUTER SPACE**

Background:

The human nature of curiosity fuels the need for exploration and adventure, and by introducing the possibility of space exploration in 1957 with the launching of the first artificial satellite to orbit Earth, the urge to explore the vastness of space developed with it. Since this first endeavour, we have sent astronauts to the moon, instruments discovered new planets and stars, and we have explored our solar system with a variety of space probes.

The United Nations has been involved in space activities since 1957 and has been committed to space being used for solely peaceful purposes. During the 1960s, different space voyages, including the first human to enter the orbit of the Earth in 1961 and the moon landing in 1969, have occurred and have furthered our understanding of the world beyond our atmosphere. In 1959, the General Assembly of the UN established the COPUOS, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, as a permanent body. It works towards international cooperation in the exploration and uses of space, by providing information and maintaining contacts with organizations. The COPUOS works alongside two subcommittees, the Scientific and Technological Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee, which focus on these issues regarding the development of space technology.

During the Cold War, there were worldwide concerns that space may become another battlefield for the rivalries between global powers, as the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. were the leading nations in space exploration. The two took part in what's now known as the "Space Race", where the Soviet Union beat the U.S.A. at almost every turn, except for the moon landing. In 1957, a week after the launching of the first artificial satellite, an American representative stated that the USA wanted to ensure that space would be demilitarized and would be used for exclusively research-based and peaceful purposes. Many nations have since joined in space-related missions and activities and the International Space Station, the ISS, was first launched in 1998, and has since been used by cosmonauts and astronauts of various nations.



Current Situation:

As of now, space exploration has become more common in comparison to the twentieth century, where it was a novel endeavour. Many nations since then have visited and continue to research outer space, including nations that are not as advanced as others. We have completed more than a hundred space-related missions and 42 countries have visited space. The goal of humanity is to further our own expansion, technology, industries, and help create a peaceful connection with other nations.

Although space is being used for peaceful and research-based purposes so far, there are concerns amongst the global community that these peaceful times will come to an end soon. Whether with the introduction of new weapons or many nations being in space currently, things may change. Many nations claim that they only use space for exploration purposes and will not use it as a war-fighting domain, however it is unclear whether this is true for the future. Some of these concerns are directly related to the introduction of military forces in space and satellites that relate to military and security operations. Although these concerns remain the COPUOS has been working towards the goal of protecting space and has created several resolutions and treaties to prevent the destruction of space and peace.

The first international agreement that states the legal issues regarding outer space was the “Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies” (The Outer Space Treaty, which is still in effect today). This treaty declares the banning of weapons of mass destruction in outer space, prohibits military activities on celestial bodies, and details the peaceful uses of outer space. Other agreements include the “Rescue Agreement”, which concerns itself with the elaboration regarding the liability for damage caused by the launching of objects into outer space and to the assistance to the return of astronauts and space vehicles, and the “Moon Agreement”, which reaffirms that the moon and other celestial bodies should only be used for peaceful purposes, that their environment remains undisturbed, and that the United Nations must be informed of the location and purpose of any station established on those bodies.



Important bloc positions:

United States of America

- Leading nation in space exploration and technological advancements in terms of space travel; partook in the “Space Race” against the Soviet Union and was the first nation to send astronauts to the moon, winning against the U.S.S.R. in that regard.
- Manages the United States Orbital Segment (USOS) in the International Space Station, alongside many other nations.
- NASA, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, was created in response to the launching of Sputnik in 1957, and to create a new government agency to conduct civilian space exploration.
- Strongly believes in using outer space only for peaceful purposes and to demilitarize space, however, has created the Space Force in 2019, a new military branch devoted to outer space military and support operations.

Russia (Soviet Union)

- Leading nation in the history of space exploration and has some of the most prominent achievements in terms of space travel, including sending the first satellite into the Earth’s orbit, sending the first living being to space (a dog named Laika), sending the first man Yuri Gagarin to space, who entered the Earth’s orbit, and countless other achievements.
- Manages the Russian Orbital Segment (ROS) in the International Space Station.
- Russia is concerned with the possibility that the US and NATO are militarizing space and are behind in technologies regarding military operations in space.

Europe (European Space Agency)

- European Space Agency works alongside the European and both organizations have common goals and interests; the EU has funded some space projects for the ESA and have shown an interest in the further exploration of Outer Space
- Nations that are part of the ESA are Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.
- The ESA is an agency used solely for peaceful purposes, but may have programmes with security components.

China

- China National Space Administration was founded in 1993 to manage national space activities.
- Although China was not a leading nation in history of space exploration, they are becoming more prominent in terms of space missions in recent years, including completing space walks and sending satellites to enter Earth’s orbits.
- It is theorized by the United States of America that China is working to weaponize space with an array of capabilities intended to target satellites and to displace the U.S.A. in space, however China’s official position is that space should be used for peaceful purposes.



Possible solutions:

1. Further Protection of Celestial Bodies
 - Placing further bans on weapons that could cause harm and mass destruction to the environment of celestial bodies.
 - Arrangements for retrievals of space vehicles and objects that have been launched into space to prevent damage.
2. Protection of Astronauts (and Cosmonauts, Taikonauts, etc.)
 - Rescue missions will be arranged if needed and will be carried out independent of which nation they belong to.
3. Prevention of Military Operations
 - By carrying out military operations, preventing the breach of the terms regarding the peaceful uses of outer space.
 - Dismissing satellites that could contribute to the militarization of outer space or satellites that are harmful towards other nations.
4. Right to Information
 - Space Agencies must relay information regarding the location and purpose of stations on celestial bodies or in outer space to prevent damaging the environment.
 - Nations would stop the spread of misinformation regarding the plans and positions of other nations.
5. Private Companies
 - Regulating private companies that involve themselves in space exploration or space-related research to prevent misunderstandings and breaching of terms regarding the peaceful uses of outer space.

Further reading:

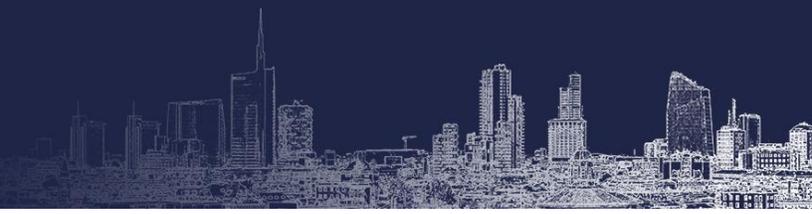
www.unoosa.org: The official website for the UNOOSA (United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs), which includes information regarding the UN's Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space's work, history, and agenda. It also contains information on treaties and agreements that are in effect, regarding the issue of the peaceful uses of outer space.

www.nasa.gov: The official website for NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration), which has further information regarding the USA's standpoint, past and current space-related activities, and history of the organization.

www.esa.int: The official website for ESA (European Space Agency), which has information regarding Europe's actions and standpoint of the purposes of space.

<http://en.roscosmos.ru/>: Further information regarding Russia's activities in space, as well as its position.

<http://www.cnsa.gov.cn/english/>: Further information regarding China's space-related activities.



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- “Outer Space Treaty- Space Law Treaties and Principles.” United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA). Accessed 8th of November 2021. <https://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/ourwork/spacelaw/treaties/introouterspacetreaty.html>
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- “Moon Agreement- Space Law Treaties and Principles.” United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA). Accessed 8th of November 2021. <https://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/ourwork/spacelaw/treaties/intromoon-agreement.html>